

Washington, DC - Law enforcement and victims' rights groups continue to pledge their support to Congressman Harry Teague's national Katie's Law. Today, Teague announced that the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) and the Surviving Parents Coalition (SPC) have joined the growing group in support of the Katie Sepich Enhanced DNA Collection Act (H.R. 4614). The Teague-sponsored legislation is a bipartisan arrestee DNA bill that encourages states to maximize the potential of forensic DNA to solve and prevent violent crimes by collecting a DNA sample upon arrest at the same time as fingerprints -- for certain felony crimes.

The National Sheriffs' Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to professionalism in the criminal justice field, praised the bill's benefits for law enforcement agents in a letter to Harry Teague. "DNA evidence is a critical component to a law enforcement investigation. DNA evidence may not always be present during a criminal investigation; however, when present, DNA has the ability to direct law enforcement to the likely perpetrator of the crime," wrote Sheriff John E. Zaruba, NSA President. "The amended Katie Sepich Enhanced DNA Collection Act of 2010 (H.R. 4614) will be a critical asset to assist law enforcement identify potential offenders in unsolved violent crimes, as well as bring closure to the victims of these crimes."

In addition to law enforcement groups, victims' rights and survivors groups have also thrown their support behind Teague's legislation. The Surviving Parents Coalition, (SPC) a victims' rights advocacy group comprised of parents whose children were victims of violent crimes, highlighted the advantages this legislation offers victims' families. In a letter to Teague, SPC's DNA Chairperson Karen Foster writes, "We can bring closure to many families by using DNA to its fullest potential to solve cold cases. Even better, we can prevent others from suffering by using DNA to identify predatory criminals who need to be removed from society."

Several groups, including the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) and the National

District Attorneys Association (NDAA), have already endorsed Harry Teague's national Katie's Law.

"Katie's Law just makes sense. Just as we have been using fingerprint evidence for years, it is time for our local and state law enforcement to get the DNA technology tools they need and deserve to protect our citizens," said Harry Teague. "I look forward to passing this important law and helping families nationwide."

Katie's Law is named after Katie Sepich, from Carlsbad, New Mexico. Katie was 22 years old when she was brutally raped and murdered. If New Mexico had required a DNA sample to be taken during arrests they could have caught her killer when he was arrested later that year but it was still three long years before her killer was apprehended.

Congressman Harry Teague has been working with Katie's parents, Jayann and David Sepich of Carlsbad to develop a national Katie's Law. This would provide support from the Department of Justice for local and state law enforcement to ensure that they are matching specific arrestees to the national DNA database. Katie's Law will also incentivize those states which not only match arrestees but also contribute to the CODIS in an effort to help save more lives and prevent crime across the country.

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